

October 25, 2000

NATIONAL SCIENCE EDUCATION ACT

Statement of HON. RON PAUL OF TEXAS

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- Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to reject the National Science Act (H.R. 4271), which violates the limits on congressional power found in Article 1, section 8 and the 10th amendment to the Constitution by using tax monies unjustly taken from the American people to promote the educational objectives favored by a few federal politicians and bureaucrats. As an OB-GYN, I certainly recognize the importance of increasing the quality of science education as well as undertaking efforts to interest children in the sciences. However, while I share the goals of the drafters of this legislation, I recognize that Congress has no constitutional authority to single out any one academic discipline as deserving special emphasis. Instead, the decision about which subjects to emphasize should be made by local officials, educators and parents.

- H.R. 4271 not only singles out science for special emphasis, certain positions of the bill will lead to a national science curriculum. For instance, the bill calls for the Department of

Education and the National Science Foundation to coordinate and disseminate information on 'standard' math and science curricula as well as licensing requirements for teachers of math, science, engineering or technology. While local school districts are not forced to adopt these standards, local schools will be pressured to adopt these standards because they are the ones favored by their DC-based overlords. I would also ask the drafters of this bill what purpose is served by spending taxpayer moneys to create and disseminate a model curriculum at the federal level if their intent is not to have local schools adopt the federally-approved model?

- I also object to the provision of this bill providing special assistance to science teachers for training and professional development as well as grants for so-called 'Master Teachers.' Of course, I recognize that, like other citizens, teachers are underpaid because they are overtaxed. This is why I have introduced the Teacher Tax Cut Act (H.R. 937) which provides all teachers with a \$1,000 tax credit. H.R. 937 effectively raises teacher salaries by lowering their taxes. In contrast H.R. 4271 raises the salaries of certain congressionally-favored educators by effectively cutting the pay of engineers, doctors, truck drivers, waiters, and even their fellow educators. Mr. Speaker, I cannot find any constitutional nor moral justification for Congress to redistribute money to any favorite class of professionals.

- If the steady decline of America's education system over the past thirty years has shown us anything, it is that centralizing control leads to a declining education system. In fact, according to a recent Manhattan Institute study of the effects of state policies promoting parental control over education, a minimal increase in parental control boosts students' average SAT verbal score by 21 points and students' SAT math score by 22 points! The Manhattan Institute study also found that increasing parental control of education is the best way to improve student performance on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) tests. Clearly, the drafters of the Constitution knew what they were doing when they forbade the Federal Government from meddling in education.

- In order to put education resources back into the hands of the American people I have introduced the Family Education Freedom Act (H.R. 935). This act provides a \$3,000 per child tax credit for parents to help cover K-12 education expenses. I have also introduced the

Education Improvement Tax Cut Act (H.R. 936), which provides a \$3,000 tax deduction for contributions to K-12 education scholarships as well as for cash or in-kind donations to private or public schools. HRs 935 and 936 move control of education resources back into the hands of the American people and help ensure parents can provide their children an excellent education. In fact, since the tax credits contained in H.R. 935 and H.R. 936 may be used to help finance the purchase of items necessary for a science education, such as labs equipment and computers, these bills will particularly benefit those citizens who wish to improve science education. I therefore urge my colleagues to reject the failed, unconstitutional command-and-control approach of H.R. 4271 and instead embrace my legislation to return control of education resources to the American people.